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TEACHING FRENCH IN THE PRESCHOOL:

WHY AND HOW

by

Ruta Zimmermann

A RESEARCH PAPER

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This research paper has been  
approved for the Graduate Committee  
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The advent and popularity of air travel have succeeded in considerably reducing the size of the world. As a result, there is an increasing need to introduce children, at an early age, to the realization that there are other peoples in the world whose language and values differ from their own. A great deal of research tends to indicate that in the early years of childhood, learning is more readily assimilated, and with less conflict intellectually, than in later years. For this reason, many schools and school districts have started programs of teaching children in the preschool years foreign languages, by a variety of methods. While much current interest is on bilingual education as geared to Spanish-English interests, there is no reason that other dual language usage should not be encouraged. Geographic proximity, community preference, and teacher expertise can be the basis for the choice of a second language.

Several programs have been developed which deal with teaching French to very young children, between the ages of three and six. French is spoken by a large number of peo-

ple throughout the world as a first or second language. It ranks eighth in the spoken languages of the world. The French nation has a rich cultural heritage, which has contributed heavily to literature, music, and art, that are more enjoyably studied in the original, and that can be easily assimilated by the preschool mind. Many French words and expressions have been incorporated into the daily language of Americans, as have their fairy tales, folk songs, and games. That these are familiar even to the very young, provides an excellent base on which to study the language and cultural similarities and differences.

Although numerous questions have been raised in recent years, concerning the teaching of foreign languages at the preschool and primary levels, the one indisputable conclusion reached is that languages may be effectively taught to children at a young age (Stern, 1969, p. 27). Arguments pertaining to early teaching, based on children learning "better" or "more quickly" than adults are, at this date inconclusive (Carroll, 1969, p. 60). There is, however, indisputable evidence

that children have been proven to make an effective start in language learning under school conditions and this early start appears to lay a good foundation for continued language study throughout the total period of full-time schooling (Stern, 1969, p. 28).

According to the neurologist, Penfield, "the time to begin what might be called a general schooling in secondary

languages in accordance with the demands of brain physiology, is between the ages of four and ten" (Penfield & Roberts, 1959, p. 255). The formative preschool years are when children learn rapidly the foundations of communicative skills (Leeper et al., 1974, p. 210). In spite of the fact that it has not been established that early childhood promotes rapid learning of a second language specifically, the assumption can easily be made that the ease with which children learn at this age is as applicable to a second language as it is to any other form of learning. Whether, in fact, it is "faster" or "better" than adult learning, need not enter the discussion. The fact that early childhood is a period when learning skills are rapidly acquired is sufficient.

There is some evidence that a language learned at an early age facilitates the re-learning of that language when it has not been used for a number of years (Carroll, 1969, p. 63). At all times it is necessary to be cognizant of the individual differences in rates of learning, ability to learn, and attitude towards learning, which can affect the total learning process.

Modern communications systems and air travel have succeeded in bringing the world more closely together. Languages with which to communicate with the rest of the world have thus become essential. Studies have shown that at least half of the world population is bilingual (Fishman,



1966, p. 121).

Everyone lives in a world in which many different languages are spoken and, therefore, it is not defensible to create, through education, a rigidly monolingual setting. If education is to reflect the realities with which we have to live, other languages and other cultures should impinge on children from the earliest stage of formal education (Stern, 1969, p. 26).

While selection of which foreign language to teach may be determined largely on geographic location, it may just as easily be determined by community or teacher preference. It may seem most logical to teach Spanish in California or Texas, which border on a Spanish speaking nation, or Florida or New York, where, with population influx and shifts, large numbers of Spanish speaking individuals now reside. The choice of French may seem most appropriate in the Northeastern states which border on the French Canadian Provinces or Louisiana with its historically French background. German might seem as appropriate to those of German extraction in Pennsylvania or Wisconsin as Swedish or Norwegian to those descendants in Minnesota. The second language of the teacher, however, must be a prime consideration. Teaching some second language can be validated in view of the shrinking size of the modern world.

At one time, French was used as a second language throughout much of Europe. Even today, "French is rivaled only by English as the language of international society and diplomacy" (Katzner, 1975, p. 52). This fact alone

partially justifies the teaching of French to the young child. French remains one of the most widely used international languages (Great Britain, 1969, p. 96). It ranks eighth in languages spoken by the peoples of the world (World Almanac, 1979, p. 189), being spoken by one hundred million individuals. It is, of course, the first language spoken in the nation of France, where there are fifty million people speaking it (Katzner, 1975, p. 341), and in Haiti, where the population is five million (Katzner, 1975, p. 342). In Canada there are six million French Canadians conversing in French as opposed to thirteen million English speaking Canadians (Katzner, 1975, p. 337). In the United States there are two and one-half million individuals who speak French (Katzner, 1975, p. 358).

Some families might wish to advocate teaching their young children to speak French because of the proximity to French speaking nations such as Canada, or a desire to visit French speaking countries such as France, Luxembourg, Haiti, or Martinique. People of French ancestry might wish to teach the French language to their young so that these children would be able to speak with older relatives -- aunts, uncles, grandparents. Individuals with exceptionally diverse or extensive backgrounds in art, literature, or music, aware of the tremendous influence of France on these spheres at different times, might want their children to learn the language to facilitate a deeper understanding of

these fields. Literature in the original language is frequently more enjoyable, so telling or reading French stories to the very young would heighten their experience and enjoyment of the tales.

## CHAPTER II

A variety of methods are available by which to teach the very young child, the preschooler from three to six, French. This can be a natural outgrowth of a social studies program. Reading a story can provide an informal introduction to the language, as it did for one first grade class in Massachusetts (Harris, 1960). In a story concerning young travelers, a boat steward taught the story children some French words, which inspired the listeners to want to learn more of the language. The teacher introduced them to simple vocabulary words and numbers, then names of foods and common items. The similarity between many French and English words and expressions were noted by the children (Harris, 1960, p. 272). The children were so enthusiastic about this program that they wrote a bilingual play depicting the typical experiences of French children. They also wrote a song and a poem in French. This particular class was fortunate enough to have a French child visit them for a short period of time who helped them perfect their pronunciation.

In this class only ten minutes a day was spent on French itself. The language was correlated with English, music, arithmetic, and play activities. Used as an enrich-

ment of the social studies program, the differences in culture and styles of living were easy for the youngsters to recognize and absorb. This teacher found the informal method "more meaningful, interesting and practical" (Harris, 1960, p. 274) and more conducive to enthusiasm than when a language was treated as a drill subject.

An informal program which introduced kindergarten youngsters to a study of French children's customs and conversational French was instituted in Oak Park, Michigan (King, 1964). These children learned simple commands, the names of familiar objects, friendly and polite greetings, the colors, numbers, and days of the week. In addition, they studied how French children lived at home and how they were taught at school. Individuals who had visited France, friends, parents, or relatives of the class members, came to the class and disclosed some of their personal experiences in that country. These visits were enhanced and extended through the use of films, pictures, slides, books, art objects, dances, songs, and souvenirs of France. These resource people were invited to a musical program presented by the students at the culmination of their study of France.

Some of the broader educational objectives for this program were the study of customs from other lands as an introduction to social studies; the desire to create in the children an awareness that many languages are spoken throughout the world; making the children aware that the world is

populated by individuals "with unique traditions, customs, and cultures, that are as important to them as ours are to us" (King, 1964, p. 24) and to broaden "the young child's horizons in keeping with the swift pace of modern living" (King, 1964, p. 24).

The University of Wisconsin conducted a summer program to introduce children to French. Although called 'French for Elementary School Children', the program involved youngsters from ages four to fourteen. Five classes were established in each of which fifteen students met for one half hour, four days a week, for exposure to oral French (Najem, 1964, p. 314). The preschool class utilized a great deal of movement and activity with the learning experience. A filmstrip cartoon depicting the adventures of Madeleine and Pierre at school and at home was used, with a synchronized record in French narration. This session lasted only ten minutes and, with its short duration, was thoroughly enjoyed by the preschoolers. An art activity was devised by drawing a house, learning the rooms, describing the grounds. Setting the table in the dining room, preparing a balanced meal in the kitchen, shopping for the foods at the market, all increased vocabulary. Pretending shopping trips for clothing, appliances, and other items were also vocabulary extending exercises. Imaginary expeditions to the zoo introduced the names of

those animals; to the farm, where the names of those were learned; to an arboreatum, where names of trees and bushes were learned; to the florist, where other plants and flower names were learned; to the planetarium, where the solar system was explored, were all within the limitations of the preschool child.

Arithmetic started by learning the numbers in French and progressed through playing Bingo. Through pattern practice and direct method teaching, separately and in combination, the youngsters were bombarded by the new language. This program utilized every conceivable form of intensive repetition. It also exposed students to a variety of grammatical changes, an approach contrary to the advice of some noted linguistic specialists (Najem, 1964, p. 314). This program was perceived as highly successful at all levels. Several advantages were seen in a program of this type:

it offers a foreign language to students who would otherwise be deprived of the experience; it alerts the public in a particular locale to the ease with which children learn languages and in turn builds support for foreign languages in the public school system; and, ... offers ideal conditions for experimentation (Najem, 1964, p. 314).

A program of "early immersion" was introduced at Plattsburgh State University College in 1976 (Derrick & Randeria, 1979). This method was chosen

because experience and research of Canadian educators have shown that early immersion language learning provides benefits that traditional methods do not. Through early immersion (at ages four or five), children learn a foreign language while they are more receptive than they are later. Furthermore, the second language is the medium of instruction, not the object of instruction (Derrick & Randeria, 1979, p. 38).

The concept of language teaching through immersion is basically the same as that for first language learning. Children learn through their activities and experiences the correct French word for home, school, teacher, friend, just as they have learned the English words for them since these elements entered their lives. Just as two-year old children, unable to express themselves in speech, understand directions from the mother at home, the three, four, or five year olds are able to understand directions in French from the teacher at school. During the first year of the program, the speech and grammar of the French may be imperfect, just as children first speaking at home use imperfect speech. In the same way that the use of past and future tense in English around the house slowly penetrates their understanding and uses, the exposure to these tenses in French at school accomplishes the same end.

Part of the basis for this program is on the bond of trust established between the children and the teacher. At



school the children associate the teacher with French because that is the language she/he speaks to them. The children respond by speaking the same language to him/her. In this program the children frequently use mixed language the first year, speaking French to the teacher and English to their friends. They may even act as interpreter for one another. Until late in the second grade, however, the intent is to use French exclusively in the classroom. At that time English is introduced in the program in the language arts curriculum. Prior to that time all questions and communicative interchanges are conducted in French.

An early introduction to another language and culture can contribute immeasurably to the attainment of basic communication skills, vocational preparedness, and cross-cultural understanding (Green, 1979, p. 91).

Because a primary concern of education today is meeting curriculum requirements, it is frequently necessary to provide greater enrichment through extension. The immersion program described by Derrick and Randeria (1979) and the programs outlined by Najem (1964) and King (1964) are examples of ways in which curriculum objectives can be met in English with concurrent instruction in French.

### CHAPTER III

A program which combines some of the aspects of the "early immersion" with the methods described in the "French for Elementary School Children", can now be found at St. Aemilian Preschool and Primary Learning Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where all children ages three through eight receive instruction in the French language for a minimum of two days per week. The program was established by the school's administrator, who strongly believes in exposing young children to a foreign language early in life, with the hope of forming positive attitudes towards foreign languages in the future school years. Cultural awareness and enrichment, as well as the excellent pronunciation of which young children are so capable of, were also important motives for establishing the program. Although the French program at St. Aemilian's has not been in operation long enough to establish the existence of any long term benefits to the children, much has been accomplished and learned since its beginning in 1973.

To determine the program's effectiveness and the amount of vocabulary retention, children who were re-enrolled at the St. Aemilian Preschool, were given an oral vocabulary recall test at the beginning of the new school year for three

consecutive years. The test consisted of picture cards depicting objects, the names of which the children had learned during French in the preceeding school year. A total of 90 children were involved in the testing process, thirty children each year. The results of this oral test showed that the children at St. Aemilian's, ages four and five, who returned to school after a summer's absence in 1976, 1977, and 1978, had retained approximately 75% of their vocabulary, and their pronunciation had remained excellent. The six and seven year old children remembered close to 85% of the vocabulary and expressions learned in previous years. Over the period of several years, it became apparent that children who stayed in the program for more than one year, showed steady progress in acquiring an increasingly larger vocabulary containing more complex words, phrases, and expressions.

At St. Aemilian's, French is taught by two teachers with extensive background and training in the language, using a variety of methods which include vocabulary drills, acting out commands and phrases, total immersion (short periods of time when only French is spoken), learning new words and sentences through songs and fingerplays, as well as the use of records, film strips, and other visual and audio-visual aids.

The teachers and the administrator at St. Aemilian's

are continually changing and improving the program, because much of their learning has come from doing. The experimentation has proven to be very effective on curriculum planning and the teaching methods employed.

The lessons are kept short; not more than 10 minutes at one time, initially, for three and four year olds, and 15 minutes for ages five and up. The time is gradually increased depending on group receptiveness and interest.

The vocabulary is kept relevant to the child's age and interests. Abstract vocabulary is avoided with the very young children; it is best to start with objects already familiar to the child. For example: The best time to learn the vocabulary for foods, utensils, and expressions pertaining to eating and cooking, is during lunch, snack, or cooking projects, at which time French can be used exclusively, at least for a brief period of time.

The group of children is kept small as possible, so that each child can have an opportunity to express himself or herself without the rest of the group becoming restless or bored. Participation keeps the children's interest alive.

Visual aids and actual objects are used continuously, especially when presenting new vocabulary. Puppets, for example, make excellent learning tools, for it is not only possible for a puppet to represent someone or something, but also to "talk" to children in French.

Children of preschool and lower primary age are too young to be assigned a "French" name, as is customary in later grades in many schools. Young children are usually reluctant to give up their names, and may not even recognize their new ones. At St. Aemilian's all children retain their own names during French.

Songs, song-games, rhymes and "comptines" (counting rhymes, sometimes non-sensical) are an important part of the program. Singing helps children acquire the natural rhythmic flow of the language by means of a pleasing activity, and also permits the teaching of certain basic vocabulary and structures by means of a different vehicle. Song-games also permit the child to move about and use his or her energy in a learning situation. The use of tapes and records by native speakers are very helpful in this area.

Most of all, learning French should be enjoyable. When children stop listening and participating, another activity is initiated.

At St. Aemilian's the parents showed considerable interest in the French program from its conception. The teachers found it to be an excellent idea to explain the program to them at a parent meeting. The program's goals and methods employed are also written up and distributed; from time to time, the Parent-Teacher meetings are used to

present a crash course in French pronunciation by the administrator and the teachers, to provide the parents with a better understanding of what their children are learning.

A list of vocabulary, expressions, phrases, and songs are provided to the parents in an effort to involve them in their children's progress.

ESSENTIALS OF FRENCH PRONUNCIATION  
PRONUNCIATION GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS  
ST. AEMILIAN PRESCHOOL  
and  
PRIMARY LEARNING CENTER

Syllabication (Division of words into syllables)

A syllable is a pronunciation unit. A vowel can be pronounced alone but a consonant, to be pronounceable, must occur with a vowel: a, le, ma, il

So far as possible every syllable in French begins with a consonant: ca/fé, Ma/rie, a/ni/mal (initial vowel constitutes a syllable)

The first of two or more consonants (except a consonant + r or l, which blend) is pronounced with the preceding syllable, the other(s) with the following syllable; mer/ci, ad/mis, é/cri/vain, ta/bleau

Stress

French syllables are pronounced with almost equal force, a very light stress being given to the last syllable, except

in words ending in silent e (e without written accent)  
 when the next-to-the-last syllable receives the stress:  
Paris, vertu, but artiste (since final e is silent)

### Consonants

Most French consonants are pronounced approximately as in English. The following exceptions should be noted:

1. Final consonants are generally silent except c, r, f, l, and q. Recall the exceptions by remembering: CaReFuL + Q

héros~~z~~, furieux~~x~~, objet~~z~~, objet~~z~~~~s~~, avec

Note:

- a. Consonants are always pronounced when followed by a vowel: peti~~z~~ but petit~~z~~
- b. The letter r is silent in verbs ending in - er (admirer, décider) and in words of more than one syllable ending in - ier (premier, dernier)

2. C followed by e, i, and y; and o are pronounced like s in see:

certain, cinéma, cylindre; garçon, façade

In all other cases, except in the combination ch, c is pronounced like k;

café, courage, curé, classe, crayon



3. Ch is generally pronounced like sh in shoe:  
Charles, chocolat
4. G is followed by e, i, and y; and j are pronounced like s in pleasure:  
général, gilet, gymnase; jargon, juger  
 In all other cases, except in the combination gn,  
g is hard as in go:  
garage, gouvernement, gladiateur, grande, guitare  
 (u in gu silent)
5. Gn is pronounced like the ni in onion:  
magnifique, champagne
6. H is always silent: hôtel, théâtre (ph, however, is pronounced like f: philosophie)
7. Ill in the middle of a word, and il at the end of a word are usually pronounced like the y in yet:  
fille, famille; soleil, travail  
 Note the following exceptions:  
ville, mille, tranquille, village, in which l is pronounced.
8. Qu is usually pronounced like k: qualité, question
9. T in the ending - tion is pronounced like s in see: nation, action
10. Double consonants usually have the same sound as single consonants: donner, aussi



u (The French sound may be formed by rounding lips as for oo in boot but uttering, instead, ee in feet.)

Nasals (nasal = vowel + m or n in same syllable)

an, en, am, em

dans, enfant, ample, temps

on, om

on, bon, région, tombe

un, um

un, lundi, parfum

in, ain, ein, ien, yn

industrie, pain, sein, rien

im, aim, eim, ym

syntax, important, faim,  
Reims, sympathique

Semi-vowels (also called semi-consonants, since they are on the borderline between vowels and consonants):

When the vowel i or y comes before a vowel of stronger stress (any vowel except mute e), it is pronounced rapidly with the tongue slightly closer to the palate than usual. That is to say, it is pronounced somewhat like y in yes:  
bien, première, croyons

The vowel combination ou, before a vowel of stronger stress, is pronounced like w in wish: oui, Louis, Louise

### Linking

When no logical stop is possible between two words, the final consonant of the first word, usually silent or not, is carried over and pronounced with the first vowel of the

first vowel of the following word if it starts with a vowel or silent h (h is always silent except as previously explained):

les étudiants; les bons étudiants; six hommes

In linking, s and x are pronounced like z,

d is pronounced like t (quand on, quand il),

EXAMPLES OF VOCABULARY  
USED AT THE  
ST. AEMILIAN PRESCHOOL  
WITH  
THREE, FOUR, AND FIVE YEAR OLD CHILDREN

FRUITS

une banane	(a banana)
une pomme	(an apple)
une fraise	(a strawberry)
une orange	(an orange)
une poire	(a pear)
des raisins	(some grapes)

COLORS

rouge	(red)
bleu	(blue)
jaune	(yellow)
orange	(orange)
vert	(green)
noir	(black)
blanc	(white)
brun	(brown)
violet	(purple)

NUMBERS

un	(one)
deux	(two)
trois	(three)
quatre	(four)
cinq	(five)
six	(six)
sept	(seven)
huit	(eight)
neuf	(nine)
dix	(ten)

It is recommended for the teacher to carry a basket with real or plastic fruit to teach the afore-mentioned. Colors can be taught by using squares cut out of construction paper. As soon as some of the vocabulary is mastered, the use of short phrases should be encouraged. For example: "Une pomme rouge" or "trois bananes jaunes" (one red apple, three yellow bananas). or: "Voici une pomme verte", (Here is a green apple).

#### FAMILY MEMBERS

la maman	(mother)	le frère	(brother)
le papa	(father)	la soeur	(sister)
le garçon	(boy)	les enfants	(children)
la petite fille	(girl)	le bébé	(baby)

If possible, puppets should be used to represent family members. The puppets can be involved in a simple conversation with the children and each other, such as:

"Bonjour maman!"	(Hello, mommy!)
"Bonjour papa!"	(Hello, daddy!)
"Qui est-ce?"	(Who is this?)
"C'est un garçon."	(This is a boy.)
"C'est une petite fille."	(This is a girl.)
"C'est _____."	(This is _____.)
"Comment vas-tu, Papa?"	(How are you, Daddy?)
"Très bien, merci!"	(Very well, thank you!)
"Au revoir."	(Good bye.)

WEATHER

Quel temps fait-il?	(What is the weather like?)
Il fait beau.	(It's nice.)
il fait froid.	(it's cold.)
Il fait chaud.	(It's hot.)
Il neige	(It's snowing.)
Il pleut.	(It's raining.)
Il fait du soleil.	(It's sunny.)

Weather can be discussed briefly at every lesson. It can be used in conversations about the seasons, clothing, sports, etc.

SEASONS

Le printemps	(spring)
L'été	(summer)
L'automne	(fall)
L'hiver	(winter)

DIRECTIVES

The following directives are used most frequently in the classroom situation. If a child is directed to perform an action such as, "Touche-toi le nez," (Touch your nose.), he or she should answer, "Je me touche le nez," (I am touching my nose.), while doing so.

The directives are listed in both the plural and singular to be used with the whole group or a single child, respectively:

Regardez, regarde	(Look, watch, see)
Écoutez, écoute	(Listen, hear)
Répétez, répète	(Repeat)
Retournez à vos places	(Return to your places)
Retourne à ta place	(Return to your place)
Faisons, faites	(do, make)
Montrez-moi	(Show me, point to me)
Montre-moi	(Show me, point to me)
Touchez, touche	(Touch)
Courez, cours	(Run)
Sautez, saute	(Jump)
Asseyez-vous, assieds-toi	(Sit, sit down)
Dites, Dis	(Tell me, Speak)
Chantez, Chante	(Sing)
Prenez, Prends	(Take, Pick up)
Marchez, marche	(March, walk)
Portez, porte	(Wear, carry)

#### PARTS OF THE BODY

la tête	the head	la bouche	the mouth
les cheveux	the hair	le nez	the nose
les yeux	the eyes	la main	the hand



le cou	the neck	les oreilles	ears
les doigts	the fingers	les dents	teeth
le dos	the back		

Examples for phrases:

"Maman a les yeux blues." (Mother has blue eyes.)

"\_\_\_\_\_ a les yeux bruns," (\_\_\_\_ has brown eyes.)

"\_\_\_\_\_ a les cheveux bruns," (\_\_\_\_ has brown hair.)

Touche les cheveux bruns," etc. (Touch the brown hair.)

CLOTHING

La robe	(dress)	Le manteau	(coat)
Le chandail	(sweater)	Les mitaines	(mittens)
La chemise	(shirt)	Les bottes	(boots)
Le pantalon	(pants)	Le foulard	(scarf)
Les souliers	(shoes)		

Examples for phrases:

"Bonjour\_\_\_\_! Qu'est-ce que tu portes?" (Hello\_\_\_\_! What are you wearing?)

"Je porte une robe jaune," (I am wearing a yellow dress.)

or

"Il fait froid. C'est l'hiver. Je porte les bottes et les mitaines." (It's cold. It's winter. I am wearing boots and mittens.)

AT THE TABLE

J'ai faim	(I am hungry)	Allons manger	(Let's eat)
J'ai soif	(I am thirsty)	Boire	(Drink)

L'eau (Water)

Le lait (milk)

La verre (glass)

Vocabulary for foods, dishes, cooking terms, etc., can be included in this unit as the children progress.

Sample conversation: (Have a pitcher of water or milk and glasses ready.)

"Regardez! Voici de l'eau. Moi, j'ai soif. Je voudrais une verre d'eau. Je bois une verre d'eau. Mmm! C'est bon!"

(Look! Here is water. I am thirsty. I'd like a glass of water. I am drinking a glass of water, Mmm! It's good!)

#### ANIMALS

L'animal (animal)

Le canard (duck)

Le lapin (rabbit)

Le chien (dog)

Le poussin (chicken)

Le chat (cat)

#### Examples:

"Voici un canard blanc. Voici un lapin brun. Il mange les carottes."

(Here is a white duck. Here is a brown rabbit. It is eating carrots),

#### Frequently used expressions:

Bonjour (Hello)

Au revoir (Good bye)

A bientôt (See you later!)  
 A demain (until tomorrow!)  
 S'il te plaît, S'il vous plaît (please)  
 Merci, merci bien (thank you)  
 Tres bien, c'est bien, bravo (very good, that's good, great)  
 Viens ici, venez ici (come here)  
 Vas-y, Allons-y (go there)  
 Comment vas-tu? (How are you?)  
 Je m'appelle (My name is \_\_\_\_\_).

Songs popular with young children:

FRÈRE JACQUES

Frère Jacques, Frère Jacques. Dormez-vous, dormez-vous?  
 Sonnez les matines, sonnez les matines, Din, din, don!  
 Din, din, don!

SUR LE PONT D'AVIGNON

Sur le pont d'avignon, l'on y danse,  
 l'on y danse  
 Sur le pont d'avignon, l'on y danse,  
 tout en rond,

Les beau messieurs font comme ci, et puis encore comme ça.

Les belles madames font comme ci, et puis encore comme ça.

Les soldats font comme ci, et puis encore comme ça.

BONJOUR HELENE

Bonjour Helene.	Bonjour Helene.
C'est le matin.	C'est le matin.
Lève toi Helene,	Lève toi Helene,
Embrasse Mama.	Embrasse Papa.

LES MARIONNETTES

Ainsi font, font, font  
 Les petites marionnettes,  
 Ainsi font, font, font  
 Trois petits tours et puis s'en vont!

Watch them dance, dance, dance  
 The little puppets  
 Watch them dance, dance, dance  
 Three small turns and off they go!

COUNTING SONG

Un, deux, trois, quatre, cinq, six, sept, et huit et neuf  
 et dix. Nous apprenons raconter comme tous les élèves  
 français.

AH OUI? AH OUI!

Si tu manges tes patates,  
 Si tu manges tes tomates,  
 Tu deviendras acrobate.

Ah oui? Ah oui!

Si je mange mes patates,  
 Si je mange mes tomates,  
 Je deviendrai acrobate,

Ah oui? Ah oui!

Si tu manges tes patates,  
 Si tu manges tes tomates,  
 Tu deviendras diplomate,

Ah oui? Ah oui!

Si je mange mes patates,  
 Si je mange mes tomates,  
 Je deviendrai diplomate.

Ah oui? Ah oui!

Si tu manges tes patates,  
 Si tu manges tes tomates,

Tu écriras des sonates.

Ah oui? Ah oui!

Si je mange mes patates,  
Si je mange mes tomates,  
Moi j'ecrai ces sonates.

Ah oui? Ah oui!

### BONJOUR SONG

Bonjour \_\_\_\_\_, comment vas-tu?  
Très bien merci, et toi?  
Comme ci, comme ça, mon cher ami. A bientôt, au revoir.

### ALOUETTE

Alouette, gentille alouette. Alouette, je te plumerai. Je  
te plumerai la tête. Je te plumerai la tête, et la tête,  
et la tête. Oh! Alouette, gentille alouette. Alouette,  
je te plumerai.

Alouette, gentille alouette.  
Alouette, je te plumerai.  
Je te plumerai le bec.  
Je te plumerai le bec,  
Et le bec, et la tête, oh!...

Alouette, gentille alouette.  
Alouette, je te plumerai.  
Je te plumerai les pattes.  
Je te plumerai les pattes,  
Et le bec, et le bec,  
Et la tête, et la tête, oh!...

Alouette, gentille alouette.  
Alouette, je te plumerai.  
Je te plumerai le cou.  
Je te plumerai le cou,  
Et le cou, et le cou,  
Et les pattes, et les pattes,  
Et le bec, et le bec,  
Et la tête, et la tête, oh!...

Alouette, gentille alouette.  
Alouette, je te plumerai.  
Je te plumerai le dos,

Je te plumerai le dos,  
Et le dos, et le dos,  
Et le cou, et le cou,  
Et les pattes, et les pattes,  
Et le bec, et le bec,  
Et la tête, et la tête, oh!...

## CHAPTER IV

A major concern of teachers' today is budgeting. Introducing French in a social studies context offers a natural means of introduction and a simple means of progression. Innumerable sources of free and inexpensive materials are available. Foreign air lines can supply posters, and travel agencies brochures. Corporations with offices in France or which are of French origin, and import companies have public relations departments that cooperate in offering colorful material. French magazines with large, colorful photographs are available at many public libraries and, in many cities at newsstands.

There are magazines as well as books printed for the very young, which may be purchased or borrowed from the Library. Many libraries have services by which they can lend suitable films or filmstrips. Language records and tapes are also frequently available from or through the public library. The loan and interlibrary loan services of university/college libraries and public city/county/state libraries are often overlooked, valuable sources for materials usually for no, or a nominal fee. Students may have family or friends who have visited France and would be willing to loan snapshots, menus, postcards, postage stamps,

and souvenir programs.

A very valuable source frequently overlooked, is the community itself. French-born members might be delighted to share their personal experiences with classes. This makes the experience more realistic to the young children as well. If the individual is a neighbor or relative of a class member, a bond of personal closeness is established between the youngsters and the visitor, making the reality of the adult's French childhood more plausible. Many individuals born outside of the United States would welcome the invitation to share their native language and their heritage with an interested, enthusiastic class of young learners.

The nearest French Consulate will have a cultural attaché who can be contacted to send information, and possibly even a representative. Members of the school staff who are French, have been to France, or studied and speak French are, of course, the most readily available, where they exist. Native speakers, or those who visit France often, are the most reliable sources for true pronunciation.

King describes a curriculum for several grade levels, Kindergarten among them. She divides it into the arbitrary areas of vocabulary/contextual, language, and cultural, with the admonition that "these are inseparable parts of a whole and must be treated as such" (King, 1979, p.92). The first group of activities - vocabulary/contextual covers eleven



areas:

1. Greetings, polite expressions, names,
2. People and classroom objects,
3. Directions applicable to classroom situations,
4. Family members,
5. Days, months, numbers,
6. Parts of the body,
7. Names of animals,
8. Adjectives of color, size, emotion,
9. Adverbs
10. Prepositions as parts of expressions or a pattern-
11. Verbs and verb expressions introduced in context,

In this program, explanations of gender and quantity are not necessary as they become evident in usage, as do adjective endings, relationships of feminine/masculine, pronouns, and articles. The sound changes occasioned by plural verb endings become distinguishable through use also. Negative and question patterns fit easily into the last part of this area using King's suggested method.

Language activities comprise the second area of concentration. Three factors common to these activities are: (1) that they simulate meaningful communication: (2) they are devised to create a situation which requires a responsive word or action as would be required in normal communication: and (3) they are situations highly controlled for syntax and lexical range, while seeming to elicit free responses.

A variety of situations can be contrived around the introduction of a new animal, can occur in game type formats, with question/answer repartee, as mini-dialogues, or in song. Repetitive imitation is stimulated through a game such as Simon Says, or through counting games. Nursery songs are easily translated from the American. In fact, "Alouette" and "Frère Jacques" are commonly known to many preschoolers. Books of French nursery songs and rhymes are available from libraries and bookstores. French members of the community may be willing to loan their personal copies of song books or nursery rhymes. Riddle games are enjoyed by this age group and encourage their paying attention, which furthers listening skills and comprehension.

Objects presented for identification can be stuffed or plastic animals, represented on flannel boards, or cut from magazines. A hide-and-seek game can be devised around some objects which may be seen elsewhere - around the school yard, at home, on the walk home, driving to visit relatives, or when shopping. Presentation in game form is particularly appropriate for preschoolers who tend to relax, lose their inhibitions, and enter into the spirit of the game. French is easily acquired and retained using this procedure.

Cultural activities, the third area, concern themselves with the processes of daily living. Included in these are customs, priorities, and values of a people as viewed from

their given perspective and through their given heritage. Such formulas of greeting as "Bonjour, madam" rather than "Hi" or "Oui, monsieur" instead of "Yeah" are exercises in both language and culture.

As mentioned, the three areas of this curriculum plan are interacting. Cultural activities can be devised in groupings around French children - at home, in school, on vacation, at the zoo, visiting a farm. Specific holidays such as Christmas provide a point of departure for differences in ways of celebrating and in means of observing specific days. Comparisons can be made in the way Bastille Day is celebrated, and how it varies from the American celebration on the Fourth of July. Consideration can be given to whether the French have an equivalent to Thanksgiving Day, or the Americans a pre-Lent celebration. At this point, further digression is possible with a description of the Louisiana observance of the Mardi Gras. Other areas of the States with French populations or French heritage can be brought into the discussion, and from there other parts of the world - Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, French Canada. The variations each of these geographic areas has made on the French language and the adaptations to the French culture can provide a great deal of discussion. Preschoolers and the very young are highly excited by holidays, so coordinating such talks with the holidays themselves will not only stimulate, but sustain interest.

Many fairy tales are French in origin. Reading them in the original, with illustrations from the books, or on flannel board or allowing the children to cut from magazines to illustrate them themselves broadens the scope of the experience for them and makes a more lasting impact. Many authors and stories in French find appeal to this age group. Babar the Elephant, Red Balloon, Anatole Over Paris, and Bemelmans' stories of Madeleine provide opportunities to combine art activities with the stories. Reproductions of French art masterpieces can be utilized as exercises in descriptive words and as a basis for creating original stories. In addition to folk and game songs the French have a rich heritage of carols for Christmas. Their currently popular music can be compared to that in the United States to disclose differences of concept relevant to classical music, 'rock and roll' and 'popular'. Discussions can ensue not only regarding the types of music, but the instrumentation used, the voices comprising the vocal groups and other types of vocal groupings. Differences between the instruments in these small groups, concert or marching bands, and symphony orchestras can all be explored. Instrument manufacturers and distributors are often able to supply pictures of the various musical instruments.

## CHAPTER V

Children of the preschool years, from three through six, have been found to be highly receptive learners at all levels. It is possible to take advantage of this receptivity to introduce young children to the cultural and historical backgrounds of another country through the language of that country. The early introduction of a new language prepares the young child to lay a foundation of cross-cultural understanding, deal with the realities of different values and standards held by other peoples, and accept the concept that different is not necessarily better or worse. The ease with which young children learn and their apparently inherent adaptability and flexibility combined with their natural curiosity allow for a wide range of possibilities.

Simply by reason of the availability of time, it is better to start teaching a language as early as possible. Children have more time in which to practice a language and will do so for a longer period of time (Carroll, 1969, p.62). They also do not have previously established habits to overcome. Whether they learn faster or retain more than adult learners has not yet been proven.

Selection of a foreign language to be taught can be decided by geographical proximity, community ancestry, or

such a mundane factor as the expertise of the teacher. The choice of French can be easily justified on the basis of its historical importance and cultural contributions. At one time it was the second language in most European countries, and still retains a predominance in today's world as a language of international society and diplomacy second only to English. Many French expressions are incorporated into American English and the language of the business world.

Several methods have been determined as very satisfactory for teaching French to the very young. While they conflict in some aspects, there is a remarkable similarity among them. The most successful ones deal with teaching aspects of daily life to the children through the use of French. The total immersion program (Derrick & Randeria, 1979) allows no English to be spoken during the first two years, once an initial stage of mixing the languages is passed. Most programs suggest a less complete submersion into the new language providing for ten or fifteen minute sessions daily (Harris, 1960; Green, 1979).

Basic to all the variations, however, is the inclusion of a great deal of music and movement activity at this early age. There are large numbers of situations, such as shopping expeditions, trips to the zoo, or eating a meal, that can be either fantasized as games, or taught as field trips, or in the classroom. The introduction of French songs and

folk dances permit digression into custom and history. The programs reviewed show that the required curriculum materials are not jeopardized, but rather enriched in this way.

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